

Finishing Touches for New Light Rail Passenger Platforms



Station platform work for the new Third Street Light Rail continued on Bayshore Boulevard at Blanken Avenue, as well as at Sunnydale Avenue, along with final track installation work, which is slated for completion by the end of May. Meanwhile, new traffic signals are also being installed, and are expected to be on by the end of April.

FTC Warns of Spammers Posing as Federal Government Operation

A new Spam Scam Alert from the Federal Trade Commission could help consumers avoid becoming identity theft victims. The Alert, "Someone Is Phishing For Your Information," warns that consumers may receive e-mails that claim to be from regulations.gov, a government Web site where consumers can comment on federal rule-making. The e-mails' subject lines typically read, "Official information," or "Urgent information to all credit card holders!" and claim that recent changes in the law require that Internet users identify themselves to the government to "create a secure and safer Internet community." The e-mail includes a link to a Web site that mimics regulations.gov and asks readers to provide their personal financial information.

In fact, the alert warns, regulations.gov does not collect financial information or charge consumers a fee and there is no law requiring Internet users to register with the government. Consumers who provide their financial information in response to unsolicited e-mail could be at risk of identity theft.

The alert advises consumers

who receive e-mail from a company or government agency asking for personal information to contact that organization using a phone number or Web address they have used in the past. They should not click on hyperlinks provided in the e-mail.

Consumers who recently have shared credit card or bank information in response to an unsolicited e-mail that claimed to be from regulations.gov should notify their credit card company or bank immediately and discuss whether they should cancel those

accounts. Consumers who provided Social Security numbers should contact one of the three credit reporting agencies, ask to have a fraud alert placed on their accounts, and obtain copies of their credit reports to be sure new accounts have not been opened in their names.

The alert says that consumers should visit the FTC's Identity Theft Web Site at www.consumer.gov/idtheft to file a complaint and learn more about how to minimize the risk of damage from identity theft.

HUD Helping Communities Expand Housing Through Regulatory Reform

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently released a new brochure that illustrates how excessive regulations can drive up local housing costs, pricing many families out of homes in the communities where they work.

HUD's *Bringing Homes Within Reach Through Regulatory Reform* is designed to encourage some 25,000 local government officials and community leaders throughout the country to work together to identify solutions to the housing affordability challenge.

Numerous studies have long concluded that regulatory barriers such as exclusionary zoning, outdated building and rehabilitation codes and duplicative review processes, can add up to 35-percent to the cost of a home or rental unit.

However, the studies come as no surprise to HUD's regulatory experts and, in fact, are the exact reason why HUD launched its America's Affordable Communities Initiative (AACI), a department-wide priority.

"In communities throughout America you can find numerous examples of burdensome rehabilitation codes, excessive land development standards and other regulatory hurdles that drive up the cost of housing," said Alphonso Jackson, Acting HUD Secretary. "Often the result is many middle-income workers, such

as police officers, firefighters, teachers and nurses are forced to commute long distances because they are unable to find affordable housing in the communities they serve." See Page 8

Muni Encourages Local Employment In Construction of Metro East Facility

S.F. Muni recently gave notice to proceed with construction of its final component in Phase I of the Third Street Light Rail Project: the Metro East facility.

Muni will continue to work with community-based organization partners and McCarthy Building Companies, Inc. to ensure local employment in the construction of the facility. To that end, a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) technical assistance firm has been hired to assist in the outreach to small local contractors and in technical assistance for the contractors, including the plan and specification view, as well as in the DBE certification process.

A surety bonding and finance program has been established to provide guarantees for bonds and loans for working capital. In addition, there will be counseling on bonding, financing and business management.

As both construction manager and general contractor for the Metro

East project, McCarthy, along with Muni have packaged the job into 60 separate smaller contracts enabling DBEs and small local contractors to bid competitively.

Metro East will be a storage and maintenance facility as well as a new Muni operations division, supporting about 80 Muni light rail vehicles (LRVs) initially and up to 120 later with future expansion. About 15 LRVs serving the Third Street line and will relieve overcrowded conditions at the Green and Geneva divisions at Geneva and San Jose avenues after about 65 LRVs are transferred to Metro East.

The facility will be built on a vacant 13-acre site formerly used by the Western Pacific Railroad that is just northwest of Pier 80 and bounded by 25th Street on the north, Illinois Street on the west, and Cesar Chavez Street on the south.

To date, Muni has hired 185 people from the community for construction jobs on the Third Street line.

March Gas Prices Drained Consumers' Wallets

California motorists experienced an unpleasant sound in March—the sound of money being sucked out of their wallets and into their car's gas tank. Despite recent movement downwards, gas prices throughout Northern California continue to average well above \$2 a gallon, and earlier in March the average price in California hit an all-time high, according to the latest report from AAA of Northern California.

"AAA is cautiously optimistic that prices have hit their current peak," said AAA of Northern California spokeswoman Jenny Mack. "Wholesale prices have dropped, and the supply situation appears to be improving slightly. As a result, recently we have started to see prices move downward."

Northern California motorists paid an average \$2.14 per gallon for regular unleaded, up a quarter since AAA's last survey on Feb. 17. The average price statewide in California went up 26 cents, to \$2.16 per gallon. California hit an all-time record high average price of \$2.18 on Mar. 6. Regionally, Bay Area motorists are paying an average \$2.17 per gallon, up 27 cents since the last AAA report. In San Francisco, prices jumped 27 cents to an average \$2.28. Nationally, prices are up eight cents since the last AAA survey, averaging \$1.72.

In response to high prices and continued high demand for gas, AAA of Northern California and the Automobile Club of Southern California are encouraging Califor-

nia motorists to reduce their gasoline consumption by saving two gallons a week.

"One of the reasons California has such high gas prices is because demand is regularly higher than available supply," said Mack. "Reducing consumption could eventually result in lower prices. It's a way for consumers to exercise some control as prices skyrocket."

According to the California Energy Commission, Californians currently use 45 million gallons of gasoline a day, but the state's refineries only produce 43 million gallons. The remaining gasoline has to be imported at a higher cost. If each of California's nearly 23 million registered drivers saved two gallons a week, it would equal a full day's production of gasoline. Reduced demand would relieve pressure on supplies and could lead to lower prices at the pump.

To achieve the greatest fuel economy, AAA suggests motorists keep their vehicles well-maintained, making sure fluids are clean and full, filters are clean and belts and hoses are not worn. Keeping tires at proper pressure is one of the best ways to save money on gasoline. For every one pound of pressure tires are under-inflated, fuel economy is affected by as much as two percent. Other ways to increase fuel economy are to lighten the load in the vehicle, to consolidate errands, and to practice smooth driving by avoiding sudden stops and fast starts.

Decorative Design Proposed for New Valley Branch Library



Visitacion Valley's proposed new branch library will have a corner entrance.

After several community meetings and months of designing, San Francisco Public Library staff, along with architects Philip Sowers and Youcef Bouhanna of the Bureau of Architecture have created an exciting and very functional conceptual design for a new Visitacion Branch Library proposed to be built at Leland Avenue and Rutland Street. Plans for the new structure are currently posted in the windows of the current branch at 45 Leland Ave.

The new design calls for an 8,700 square-foot one story building to replace the Super Fair Market, which now leases the present building. Key features of the current design include:

*A corner entrance with a prominent tower to make the

building easily identifiable in the neighborhood. It will serve as a beacon, drawing the community to the library.

*A service desk with sight lines to all areas of the library.

*Young adults, children, and adults separated for privacy.

*A new program room accessible after hours for community use.

*Two study rooms to allow space for quiet independent or group study.

*Different roof heights with acoustical treatments to create quiet spaces.

*Windows to provide lighting and natural ventilation to all areas of library.

*Paved courtyards available for outside library programming.

*An organized staff area for handling of returned materials.

*A fireplace and seating to create a comfortable reading area.

*Nearly twice as many books and other materials.

*Solar panels to provide an alternative energy source.

*A decorative gate for security to the landscaped area, and

*A traditional architectural style and building materials.

S.F. Public Library has also formalized agreements with both Visitacion Valley Elementary and Middle schools to create a joint homework center and family literacy program. The new program and study rooms will be particularly useful for these programs.

The Library recently applied for State Proposition 14 funds to supplement a budget for this new branch, as the Branch Library Improvement Program only had funds for a 7,200 square-foot building. If the City doesn't receive additional state funding, the new branch would need to be redesigned. A community meeting is planned by the Library later this year after the State has made their grant determination.

Gunmen Shoot Up Sunnydale Avenue

A Saturday afternoon barbecue was interrupted by repeated gunfire Mar. 13 at the Sunnydale housing complex when two young men randomly fired dozens of rounds from automatic weapons.

Witnesses claim the gunmen got out of a gold late-model vehicle at Sunnydale Avenue and Hahn Street just after 1 p.m. and began firing M-16 assault rifles in various directions at buildings and other cars, leaving a trail of shells in their path. One woman was hit in the arm by a stray bullet.

Members of the Peacemakers, a local anti-violence group, were having a barbecue adjacent to the intersection when the gunfire erupted. The group holds regular weekly marches through Sunnydale to promote peaceful neighborly relations.

Grapevine Mailbox

Three Strikes Law

Dear Editor:

March marked the tenth anniversary of California's "three-strikes-and-you're-out" law. It is little surprise that this law is steeped in controversy a decade later. A Justice Policy Institute study found that 65 percent of those imprisoned during the decade were sentenced for nonviolent offenses. The cost to taxpayers has been huge.

While we invest in prisons, we are ignoring the prevention initiatives that can stop violent crimes. For instance, studies show that home visitation can reduce serious child abuse a leading risk factor for violence later in life. Yet we are not funding the home visitation that this state needs.

As a result, petty criminals spend their lives in prison, while children who grow up in violent homes go without counseling or aid. Drug abusers get ten-year sentences, while young parents at risk for abuse get no help or support.

This approach is shortsighted and harmful. It may even perpetuate the kind of violence that many hoped "three strikes" would stop.

We won't stop the violence that threatens us all until we invest in prevention and early intervention. The money now funding our prisons could be much better spent. Sincerely, Esta Soler, President, Family Violence Prevention Fund

Message from Saudi Arabia

Dear Editor:

As a patriotic American living in a dangerous corner of the world, I am heartened to observe the tremendous strides the Bush administration is making toward reforming the Middle East. President Bush's call for a democratic Middle East is a bold step forward that is badly needed. In this region where such basic American rights as freedom of worship, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly are prohibited, it is a refreshing change of perspective for our President to speak of democracy in this region.

But Bush is not confining his steps to mere rhetoric. He is a man of decisive action. We Americans can be proud that he has liberated two oppressive countries - Afghanistan and Iraq - and has established democratic institutions in both of them. For example, the development of the recent Iraqi provisional constitution is an enormous achievement by the Bush administration in fostering the winds of freedom and democracy.

While there is some resistance here to change in the status quo, I sense that people in the Middle East are, down deep, receptive to the opportunity to consider the establishment of democracy and freedom. Being captives of oppressive regimes, they may not openly call for such change, but I feel they are amenable to it. This is the sense that I get from a street-level perspective of people in the Middle East.

Therefore, now is not the time for America to falter in its campaign to bring peace, freedom, democracy, and justice to the Middle East. I strongly encourage all my fellow Americans back home to continue to give your full support to our President at this time of critical change in the Middle East. Together

we may very well see the institution of a more peaceful region and a more peaceful world. And for this, we can be grateful to the sagacious leadership of George W. Bush. Sincerely, Kim Hester, P.O. Box 691, Dhahran, 31932, Saudi Arabia

Regional Hearings Continue on Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence

by CA Attorney General Bill Lockyer

Domestic violence continues to be an epidemic in California. In 2002, California local law enforcement agencies received 196,569 domestic violence-related calls for assistance. During the same year, there were 153 murders committed as a result of intimate partner violence, and 50,479 adults and juveniles were arrested for spousal abuse.

Over the past 15 years, California's criminal justice agencies have taken on many new responsibilities in an effort to reduce the incidence and devastation of domestic violence. But how are these agencies carrying out those responsibilities? And how effective are their efforts?

These are difficult questions to answer in large part because the necessary information is scattered across the numerous autonomous agencies that make up each county's criminal justice system. The policies and practices of these agencies vary widely among the 58 counties.

In order to answer the important question of how California is dealing with domestic violence, I recently convened the Attorney General's Task Force on Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence.

The task force is holding regional hearings throughout the state this year to study local policies and practices, identify those that work well and determine any that may harm or threaten the safety of domestic violence victims.

Members of the task force include diverse representatives of local and state law enforcement agencies, probation offices, prosecutors, public defenders, judges, domestic violence victims' advocates and public health officials, practitioners and researchers.

I have asked the task force to focus its fact-gathering and assessment efforts on the following four areas:

- 1) How are domestic violence restraining orders obtained and enforced?
- 2) How does law enforcement respond to mandated reports of domestic violence by health care practitioners?
- 3) How do the courts, probation and batterer intervention programs hold batterers accountable?
- 4) How do prosecutors' offices handle misdemeanor domestic violence cases?

The task force's first regional hearings were held in San Diego on January 21 and in Oakland on

FTC and Justice Department Halt Identity Theft Scam

In a joint law enforcement initiative, the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice have brought two separate actions to shut

down a spam operation that hijacked logos from AOL and Paypal to con hundreds of consumers into providing credit card and bank account numbers.

At the request of the FTC, a U.S. District Court ordered the defendant to halt his identity theft scam, known as "phishing."

The Justice Department obtained a criminal conviction and the defendant is awaiting sentencing.

The scam worked like this: Consumers received e-mail that appeared to come from America Online or Paypal. The "from" line identified the sender as "billing center," or "account department" and the subject line carried warnings such as "AOL Billing Error Please Read Enclosed Email," and "Please Update Account Information Urgent!"

The text of the message contained a warning that if the consumers did not respond to the e-mail, their account would be cancelled. Some of the spam said, "... we have to ask all our members for updated/correct billing information. Please be advised that this is mandatory. If we do not get your updated billing information, your account will be revoked and put under review and may be cancelled." A hyperlink in the e-mail took consumers to what appeared to be the AOL Billing Center, with AOL's logo and live links to real AOL Web pages. But the copy-cat Web page belonged to the defendant. The defendant asked consumers to provide information such as their names and mothers' maiden names, billing addresses, Social Security numbers, dates of birth, bank account numbers, and bank routing numbers. The defendant also asked consumers to provide their AOL screen

The Lasting Effects of Media on Adolescents

While there is lots of sex on TV, movies, music and the Internet, very little is known about its effect on children and teenagers. That may be the most troubling result of a new study released by The Medical Institute for Sexual Health.

One statistic shows that the average teenager spends three to four hours a day watching TV. According to The Medical Institute's president, Joe S. McIlhenny, MD, for every hour of programming watched by adolescents, an average of 6.7 scenes include sexual topics.

The Medical Institute looked at 20 years of research and reviewed more than 2,500 research documents and found only 19 that look at the effect of mass media on adolescent sexual attitudes and behavior. The little bit of research available suggests that adolescents exposed to TV with sexual content tend to have an unrealistic and unrealistically positive view of premarital sex. How that impacts behavior is unknown.

Furthermore, no research has been conducted exploring the impact of sexual content on the Internet, on radio and CDs, and video and computer games.

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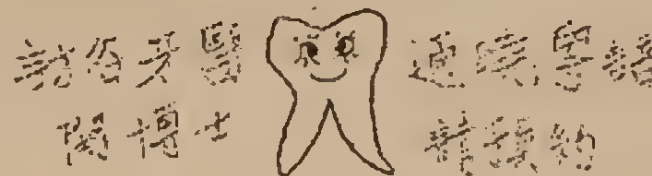
GRAPEVINE

Published monthly by Visitation Valley Community Center, 60 Raymond Ave., San Francisco, CA 94134, (415) 467-9300. Fax: 467-3757; visvalley@earthlink.net Web: <http://home.earthlink.net/~visvalley>

Editor: Len Appiano
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Visitation Valley Grapevine, named by Pat Crocker, is a Registered California Trademark of Visitation Valley Community Center
Executive Director: Julia A. Kavanagh
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Come to Church This Week



Micro-Minute

by Mr. Food

Ground Beef

What do you think the most versatile meat is? Well, in my book, it's got to be ground beef. It works in everything from all-American hamburgers to creamy stroganoffs for the fanciest of meals. And here's another ground beef plus...it cooks up tasty and moist in our microwave ovens!

Check out my ground beef cooking tips:

*Defrosting ground beef on the countertop is a big no-no; defrosting it in the microwave is not only safer, but quicker too! Place the meat in a microwave-safe bowl or plate, and defrost for 4 to 5 minutes per pound, turning it occasionally and removing the defrosted portions. After looking at several microwaves, I found that by simply entering the item's weight on the Panasonic Inverter Microwave, the "Turbo Defrost" feature thaws meat, fish, and poultry with the most fool-proof method. After defrosting anything, cook the item immediately; do not refreeze meat once it has been defrosted.

*Many dishes (like the All-in-One Goulash Bake, below) continue to cook even after they've finished cooking in the microwave. By covering a casserole dish and allowing it to stand for 5 to 10 minutes, it'll continue to cook the center without overcooking the edges! That's what we call "stand time."

*By using a browning dish, you can enjoy juicy hamburgers made in your microwave in less than the time it takes to heat up your grill. You can warm up the buns in the microwave, as well - just wrap them in paper towels and heat on high power for about 10 seconds individually, or 12 to 17 seconds for two at a time.

*Are you keeping an eye on your waistline? To make ground beef even healthier for us, place thawed ground beef in a microwave-safe colander over a microwave-safe bowl. Cook beef on high power, stirring a few times until no pink remains. The grease and fat will drip into the bowl, leaving lighter cooked beef to use in our recipes.

Want to give the gang something to cheer about? Try these microwave favorites using ground beef. They will have everybody asking for second helpings of all the...**"OOH IT'S SO GOOD!!"**

All-in-One Goulash Bake (4 to 6 servings)

"I love one-pot dishes 'cause we get an all-in-one meal with easy preparation and cleanup, which means no mess and no fuss!"

1 pound ground beef; 1 jar (32 ounces) spaghetti sauce; ½ cup water; 1 green bell pepper, chopped; 1 onion, chopped; 2 garlic cloves, minced; 1-½ cups cooked elbow macaroni; 1-½ cups (6 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese, divided; ½ teaspoon salt; ½ teaspoon black pepper.

1. Crumble the beef into a microwave-safe 3-quart casserole dish. Microwave at 80 percent power for 3 to 4 minutes, or until no pink remains.

2. Stir in the spaghetti sauce, water, bell pepper, onion, garlic, macaroni, 1 cup mozzarella cheese, the salt, and pepper. Microwave at 80 percent power for 15 to 16 minutes, stirring halfway through.

3. Sprinkle the remaining ½ cup mozzarella cheese over the top of the goulash. Microwave at 80 percent power for 1 to 2 minutes, or until the cheese melts. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Fiesta Tacos (8 tacos)

"Make cooking fun for the whole family and get the kids involved by having a make-your-own taco meal!"

1/2 green bell pepper, chopped; 1 pound ground beef; 2 tablespoons taco seasoning; ½ cup salsa; 8 taco shells; 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded Cheddar cheese; 1 cup shredded lettuce; 1 tomato, chopped

1. Place the green pepper in a 2-quart microwave-safe bowl and crumble the ground beef over the top. Microwave at 80 percent power for 4 minutes, or until no pink remains in the beef; drain.

2. Stir in the taco seasoning and salsa; mix well. Cover and microwave at 70 percent power for 3 minutes.

3. Equally divide the meat mixture into the taco shells and top with the cheese, lettuce, and tomato. Serve immediately.

Fire Station Chili

(4 servings)

"Got a kitchen emergency? Need a quick-fix meal that'll satisfy everyone - even the pickiest eaters? This recipe is sure to save the day!"

1 tablespoon vegetable oil; 1 small onion, chopped; 2 garlic cloves, minced; 1 pound ground beef; 1 can (16 ounces) red kidney beans, drained; 1 can (14 ounces) crushed tomatoes; 3 tablespoons chili powder; 1 tablespoon ground cumin; 1 teaspoon salt; ½ teaspoon black pepper.

1. In a 3-quart microwave-safe casserole dish, combine the oil, onion, and garlic. Microwave at 90 percent power for 1-½ to 2 minutes, or until the onion is tender.

2. Crumble the ground beef into the onion mixture. Microwave at 80 percent power for 4 minutes, or until no pink remains; drain.

3. Add the remaining ingredients; mix well. Microwave at 80 percent

power for 8 minutes, stirring halfway through. Serve immediately.

Italian Meatballs

(15 meatballs)

"Who doesn't love a heaping bowl of spaghetti and meatballs? Now it's quick and easy enough to solve our dinnertime dilemma!"

1 pound ground beef; ¾ cup plain bread crumbs; ½ cup water; 1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh parsley; 1 egg;

1-½ teaspoons garlic powder; 1 teaspoon salt; 1 teaspoon black pepper; 1 jar (28 ounces) spaghetti sauce; 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese; 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese.

1. Coat a microwave-safe 9" x 13" baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.

2. In a large bowl, combine the ground beef, bread crumbs, water, parsley, egg, garlic powder, salt, and pepper; mix well. Form the mixture into 15 meatballs, and place in the baking dish.

3. In a medium bowl, combine the spaghetti sauce and Parmesan cheese; pour over the meatballs. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave at 70 percent power for 12 minutes, or until the meatballs are completely cooked through and the juices run clear.

4. Remove the plastic wrap and sprinkle the meatballs with the mozzarella cheese. Microwave at 70 percent power for 1 to 1-½ minutes, or until the cheese is melted.

Surveillance Camera Aided in Assault Arrests

Film from a surveillance camera on a trolley bus on S.F. Muni's 5 Fulton line was recently used to identify juvenile suspects in an assault and attempted robbery on the bus. Five suspects have now been arrested and booked.

In the incident, juveniles attacked a 25-year-old man on the bus when he tried to stop them from harassing a young female passenger. During the assault, the juveniles attempted to steal the man's wallet.

"This is a great example of how the cameras on our transit vehicles are helping to fight crime," said Muni Director Michael T. Burns, "and how Muni, the Police Department, and the School District are working together to make Muni safe for all of our riders."

Officers Chuck Lofgren and Tim Gibson of the SFPD Muni Detail conducted an investigation and

made the arrests with the help of SFPD School Resource Officer Nick Rainford, along with Galileo High School Dean Paul Robertson, who identified the five suspects from film.

The juveniles remain in custody, and an investigation is proceeding to identify the remaining suspects involved in the incident.

"I strongly support the efforts of the authorities to bring to justice those believed responsible for the Muni incident," said SFUSD Superintendent Arlene Ackerman. "Campus safety, as well as traveling to and from school, is a top priority of the San Francisco Unified School District. In that regard, I want to be clear that any alleged violence committed by students against other students or citizens should not - and will not - be tolerated."

Poor Rix's Almanac

by Rix Quinn

Dear Poor Rix: I hear there's some research that claims people today have shorter attention spans. Could this be true? - Concerned

Well, it appears that because multiple messages bombard us daily, we mentally "delete" those we don't currently need.

(This explains why we forget what we had for breakfast, or why Poor Rix simply calls his friends "Pal.")

Latest reports - compiled by scientists who pay attention - set the average adult attention span at only eight minutes. It's reportedly even shorter if you're a dog, and shorter still if you're a roaming animal, like a wild bachelor.

The key to getting attention, research says, is to appeal to as many senses as possible.

If we can see something, hear it, and have a chance to "talk back" to it (such as responding to a message by typing a response), we're more likely to retain it.

Following this logic, the best way to make a person remember you is to meet her, ask questions, listen to her answers, shake her hand, then buy her dinner.

A few years ago, we called this a "date."

Today, however, we applaud it as a great scientific discovery.

So what have we learned?

1. To get somebody's attention, ask him or her out for dinner.

2. To keep that person's attention, limit the date to eight minutes.

Dear Poor Rix: My question to you concerns all the recent probing on Mars to find out if it was ever hospitable to life. What do you think this information could possibly be used for? - Ben Horner, Hastings, Minn.

Poor Rix loves stories about life on Mars. In fact, one of my friends claims a live Martian lives in his garage, disguised as a car's hood ornament.

But seriously, the planet is named for Mars, the ancient god of war, because it appears to be fiery red. It's 35 million miles from earth, a damn long car trip without gas stations, oxygen, or bathrooms.

Scientists observing this planet gave certain parts of it great names, like the Fountain of Youth and the Sea of Venus. These places sound

pretty, but you can't really tell what they look like, because the planet's tourist brochure photos are pretty bad.

Researchers don't believe Mars has much intelligent life, a trait it shares with neighboring planets. But some suspect plant life grows there, even though nobody's around to water it.

Here are a few uneducated guesses about what we might do with this planet:

1. Mars' average temperature is below 32 degrees, so maybe we could store frozen food in its cold regions.

2. Its gravitational pull is one-third that of earth, an ideal place for high jumpers, long jumpers, and pole-vaulters to attempt record leaps.

3. Mars' seasons are similar to ours, but each year is 687 days. That makes a damn long school year, but offers 172 days for football, not counting playoffs.

Help, Poor Rix! My cat just ate my bird. Is that bad? - Animal Lover

Sadly, your birdie and kitty are part of a huge "food chain." That means stronger animals often devour weaker ones, and explains why a well-financed politician can usually defeat one with a smaller wallet.

But regarding your situation, eating a bird likely won't hurt the cat. For the bird, however, it's probably fatal.

Hey, Poor Rix: Please settle these ongoing arguments we have at work. Is popcorn really corn? Is the tomato a fruit or vegetable? How about an eggplant? - Office Manager

Popcorn is actually corn. A unicorn is not.

Some people think tomatoes are fruit, and others think they are vegetables. My Uncle Hickory claims tomatoes are a grain, but he's always been kind of a nut.

As for eggplant, I'm clueless. Poor Rix once tried to plant an egg, but it never grew a chicken.

Poor Rix: At night, I get frequent calls from sales people. Does this happen to you? - Larry

Yes. Last night I got a call from a guy who offered ventriloquism lessons. "How do I know they work?" I asked.

"Because," he said, "right now my dummy's talking to you, and I'm drinking water."

Poor Rix offers bad answers to good questions. E-mail him at rixquinn@charter.net.



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Book Reviews

How To Keep Yourself And Your Children Well

Researcher and President of the Morehouse College School of Medicine James R. Gavin III, M.D., Ph.D., wants people to live long and healthy lives. With Sherrye Landrum, he has written Dr. Gavin's Health Guide For African Americans: How to Keep Yourself and Your Children Well (Small Steps Press, an imprint of the American Diabetes Association; \$14.95, trade paper), a comprehensive book to living healthier and smarter.

Drawing on his 30-year medical career and passion for people, Dr. Gavin presents clear and concrete steps that anyone can take to become healthier.

First, there is easy-to-follow advice about food and drink with detailed explanations about good and bad fats, carbohydrates, and his 5-a-Day rule regarding fruits and vegetables. He focuses on steps that are easy to accomplish while learning how to read and understand food labels (pay attention to fat and fiber content), park further away from your destination and use those extra steps to start adding exercise to your daily routine. Dr. Gavin's health plan is considered inviting and not overwhelming to implement.

Perhaps most importantly, he explains why paying attention to diet and exercise is essential to avoiding major illness. He devotes chapters to the power of emotion; obesity; high blood pressure; heart disease, stroke, and cholesterol; diabetes; kidney disease; and cancer. Each chapter includes questions readers can ask themselves to evaluate their current health status, goals and reasonable expectations. Dr. Gavin then describes the risk factors and symptoms

Kinship Support Group Start in April at VVCC

The Family and Community Services Center of Visitation Valley Community Center will be hosting a 10-week *Kinship Support Group* designed to serve and help individuals grandparents who need to cope with difficult life circumstances. Sessions will be held in the VVCC ballroom, 50 Raymond Ave. on successive Fridays from Apr. 16 through June 18 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

The Kinship Support Group will provide members with a safe, supportive, and non-coercive environment in understanding kin parenting, while learning the importance of physical and mental health, legal rights, and community resources. Childcare is available, and refreshments, and a free gift bag will be provided. More information is available by calling the Family and Community Services Center at (415) 586-6998.

for each illness and explains how to avoid catastrophe.

The book has separate chapters on women's and men's health, as well as a chapter about aging.

As a bonus, at the end of each chapter there are lists of key sources for additional information, complete with Web addresses and phone numbers for organizations that can help.

"This book can show you several ways to make vast and sweeping changes in your lives. It will encourage you to search for new ways that you and your family can live well and be well at the same time," said David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D., and Former Surgeon General of the United States.

The book is available at <http://store.diabetes.org>, 1-800-232-6733 and at local bookstores.

The health challenge that faces every American, regardless of ethnic background, is deadly serious, and it comes from having too much to eat and too little exercise, says Dr. James R. Gavin III, in his new book.

87-Year-Old's Joyful Life And Insights

For readers who enjoy books that celebrate life's simple pleasures, 87-year-old Dorothy Jean Wetstra and her beloved farming town of Partonville, Ill., are sure to become instant favorites.

In her hilarious and touching new series, author Charlene Ann Baumbich introduces readers to "Dearest Dorothy," who tools around town in a 1976 Lincoln Continental aptly named "The Tank." She also plays buncos regularly with her pals, and grabs a stool at Harry's counter often enough to stay on top of the latest breaking news-which she often creates herself!

In the series debut, *Dearest Dorothy, Are We There Yet?* (Penguin Original, \$10.95), Dorothy faces a decision that may change her town forever-and her gift for shaking things up comes in handy. In the second book *Dearest Dorothy, Slow Down, You're Wearing Us Out!* (Penguin Original, \$10.95), the town's irresistible cast of characters is back in full swing as they confront some of the many surprises life sends their way.

Dorothy, a former bandleader who marches her way into the hearts of all Partonvillers-well, all except Gladys McKem, the town's acting Mayor-is always in the thick of things. Whether she's trying to catch crawdaddies, whipping up an impromptu dinner-party menu of leftovers, talking to the Big Guy, making a wisecrack or giving someone who needs one a big hug, she lives life flat out.

Throughout the books-including *Dearest Dorothy, Help! I've Lost Myself*, due in September 2004-Baumbich entertains and rejuvenates

readers with side-splitting humor, uncommon wisdom and passionate insights. Fasten your seat belt...it's a wild, fun, provocative, heart-warming ride!

Baumbich is an award-winning journalist whose work has appeared in the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Sun-Times, Today's Christian Woman and numerous other magazines and newspapers. Also the author of six nonfiction books of humor and inspiration, she lives in Illinois.

What Are You Trading Up For?

Whether it's something small, like a Belvedere martini, or something big, like a Viking range, these days more Americans are trading up.

A majority of Americans say they regularly trade up to a product that they consider to be more tasteful, of better quality and more emotionally appealing than the regular-priced version.

Folks are not only trading up in the little luxuries, such as chocolates, bottled water and foaming bath gel. They're also paying more for high-ticket items, such as kitchen appliances, home theater, cars and adventure travel vacations. Most people have at least one category of goods they refuse to compromise on.

"These premium products are called New Luxury goods," says Michael J. Silverstein, author of the new book *Trading Up*, "because they're better than standard fare but more affordable than old-style luxuries."

Pontiac is the standard brand. BMW is New Luxury. Rolls Royce is Old Luxury.

Consumers also regularly trade down, according to research conducted by The Boston Consulting Group, the business consulting group where Silverstein is a partner. "Sometimes they'll go without something so they can save money to buy the premium goods they really want," he says. "One young woman told us she skipped lunch for a week so she could buy a Victoria's Secret bra."

Even rich folks trade down, like the Mercedes driver who shops at Costco. There is no "average" American consumer anymore. These new American consumers don't buy New Luxury goods just for status. They buy them because they think they will have superior technical features, perform better and, most important, make them feel good.

A \$6 Panera sandwich is an adventure in taste. A \$3,000 set of Callaway golf clubs makes even a duffer feel like a pro.

"Consumers buy premium goods for four major reasons: to reward themselves, to connect with loved ones, to express individual style and for an exciting experience. But everyone is different," says Silverstein. "One consumer's have-to-have product is another person's couldn't-care-less commodity."

People can afford to trade up because they have more discretionary income than ever before. Plus, more women are working and feel entitled to spend their hard-earned money on themselves. Also, couples having kids later have more money to spend on them. Marketers beware. Consumers expect more, and they are determined to get it.

Driving the trading up trend are people with more discretionary income than ever before.

Crossword Puzzle Solution

P	U	P	A	R	H	E	E	R	N	A
S	T	I	B	E	A	R	L	Y	A	M
I	A	N	A	I	R	R	I	T	A	T
O	D	O	N	T	C	A	L	L		
R	E	C	I	P	E	D	I	B		
A	R	H	A	T	S	A	T	S	I	N
A	I	L		R	A	B		U	T	E
D	E	E		B	A	C	A	S	I	A
			F	E	B		T	I	T	L
			O	B	I	A	B	A	S	I
C	H	A	R	C	O	A	L	R	A	F
A	N	A		O	B	R	A	U	S	D
B	E	L		N	O	O	K	P	E	A

Healthy Ideas

*Eighty-one percent of all playground injuries occur as a result of falls. To lower this statistic, schools have tried to make the ground (or fall zones) in playgrounds softer. Many use recycled, shredded tires. The tires, which are completely non-toxic, are considered one of the best ways to protect kids. The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, as well as other agencies, reported shredded tire chips have consistently outperformed all other surface material in impact absorption. Companies such as GroundScape(tm) Technologies make the ground covering in a variety of colors, guarantee the tires won't mark children's shoes or hands and that the product will last for decades. For more information visit www.groundscape.com.

*High blood levels of a particular amino acid, homocysteine, have been linked to an increased risk of heart disease and stroke. Scientists have discovered that a diet rich in folic acid lowers levels of homocysteine. A study published in the New England Journal of Medicine found that blood homocysteine levels went down in men and women who ate a daily bowl of breakfast cereal (study participants ate Total cereal) that was fortified with folic acid. It has been estimated that lowering blood homocysteine levels by increasing folic acid intake could significantly reduce risk of heart disease, blood clots in veins, and stroke. *When it comes to buying medicines, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) believes that nothing is more important than safety. With this in mind, FDA is warning consumers not to purchase medications from foreign countries, including Canadian Internet pharmacies. Non-FDA approved products sold from these

outlets can be risky and dangerous. The FDA's warning follows a recent announcement by the government of Canada that it cannot assure the safety or effectiveness of medicines being purchased by U.S. consumers from Canada. To make sure that an Internet site or pharmacy is a licensed pharmacy in good standing in your state, check with the state board of pharmacy or with the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) at www.nabp.net.

*A new survey by the American Dietetic Association (ADA) Foundation finds children and their parents may not always be on the same page when it comes to nutrition and physical activity. For example, the nationwide survey of 615 pairs of children and parents found that kids eat more often than many parents realize, and eat more often in front of the TV or computer. While 22 percent of children said they eat "some of the time," "most of the time" or "all of the time" because they are angry, sad or depressed, only about 11 percent of their parents thought that was the case. The ADA Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the American Dietetic Association, the nation's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. You can visit ADA at www.eatright.org.

*Taking care of your eyes is extremely important. Did you know that 80 percent of the world's blindness is preventable? As "spokesfrog" for the Vision 2020-The Right To Sight (a campaign for the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness-IAPB), Kermit the Frog recommends that you get regular eye exams, have plenty of light when reading and rest your eyes for five minutes every 30-60 minutes when using a computer. To learn more about the "Right To Sight" campaign visit www.V2020.org.

Improving Nutritional Outlook with Vegetables

A new report reveals some interesting facts about frozen vegetables that Americans might benefit from knowing.

Nearly two-thirds of Americans do not believe or are not sure frozen vegetables are as nutritious as fresh vegetables, despite scientific research supporting that fact. That statistic is from the Green Giant Vegetable Report, a new nationwide survey that reveals the truth about America's veggie eating habits and perceptions. The survey also found that more than half (53 percent) admit to throwing away almost \$100 a year on fresh vegetables that spoil before being used.

"By keeping a range of frozen vegetables on hand, consumers can improve their family's nutritional outlook and widen their culinary horizons, while saving both time and money," says Alton Brown, television chef, food science expert and author of the 2002 award-winning book "I'm Just Here for the Food" and New York Times bestseller "Alton Brown's Gear for Your Kitchen." "When vegetables are frozen properly, nutrients are literally locked inside. Since they're always there when you need them, creating side dishes or making additions to entrees is a snap."

While most adults recognize that frozen vegetables are convenient and quick to prepare, only a very

few (11 percent) recognize the nutritional benefits. According to the report, more than half (58 percent) of Americans claim they would eat frozen more often if they knew they were as nutritious as fresh vegetables. Common complaints about fresh vegetables are that they often spoil before being used (30 percent) and are not always on hand when needed (26 percent).

When it comes to eating vegetables, the report showed that less than one-third of Americans say they meet their daily vegetable requirements, which the United States Department of Food and Agriculture's (USDA) Food Guide Pyramid recommends as three to five servings.

To dispel confusion and assist consumers with meeting their daily vegetable goal, several varieties of Green Giant frozen vegetables will start carrying an on-pack nutrition claim. The new claim, "Frozen Vegetables Are As Nutritious As Fresh!" will remind consumers that they can easily get key nutritional benefits of fresh vegetables by selecting their favorite frozen vegetable varieties.

"In my kitchen, the freezer is always stocked with a wide range of frozen vegetables," says Brown.

For easy ways to incorporate vegetables into meals, visit www.greengiant.com.

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For more information, call Pat at the
VCC Senior Program: (415) 467-4499

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IRS Warns of New Scams for 2004

WASHINGTON - In an update of an annual consumer alert, the Internal Revenue Service urged taxpayers to avoid falling victim to one of the "Dirty Dozen" tax scams and a variety of other schemes. In the new 2004 ranking, several new scams have reached the top of the consumer watch list, including abusive trusts and the "claim of right" doctrine.

In addition, the IRS has taken a new step this year and issued 10 new pieces of legal guidance involving scams in the "Dirty Dozen" and other tax schemes. The new guidance debunks the schemes and provides new legal details to help tax practitioners and taxpayers.

Taxpayers who suspect tax fraud can report it to the IRS at 1-800-829-0433.

The IRS urges people to avoid these common schemes:

1. *Misuse of Trusts.* Promoters of abusive tax transactions are increasingly urging taxpayers to transfer assets into trusts. The promoters promise a variety of benefits, such as the reduction of income subject to tax, deductions for personal expenses paid by the trust and reduction of gift or estate taxes. Taxpayers should be aware that abusive trust arrangements will not produce the tax benefits advertised by their promoters and that the IRS is actively examining these types of trust arrangements.

2. *"Claim of Right" Doctrine.* In this emerging scheme, people file returns and attempt to take a deduction equal to the entire amount of their wages. The promoters advise them to label the deduction as "a necessary expense for the production of income" or "compensation for personal services actually rendered". The deduction is based on a complete misinterpretation of the Internal Revenue Code and has no basis in law.

3. *Corporation Sole.* The idea is that the arrangement entitles the individual to exemption from federal

income taxes as a nonprofit, religious organization as described in tax laws. When used as intended, Corporation Sole statutes enable religious leaders — typically bishops or parsons — to become incorporated as individuals as a way of separating themselves legally from the control and ownership of church assets. But the rules have been twisted at seminars where promoters charge fees of up to \$1,000 or more per person. Would-be participants are mistakenly told that Corporation Sole laws provide a "legal" way to escape paying federal income taxes, child support and other personal debts.

4. *Offshore Transactions.* Some people use offshore transactions to avoid paying United States taxes. Use of an offshore bank account, brokerage account, credit card, wire transfer, trust, offshore employee leasing or other arrangement to hide or underreport income or to claim false deductions on a federal tax return is illegal. A taxpayer involved in these schemes could be subject to payment of taxes, interest, penalties and potential criminal prosecution. This was the top scam in the 2003 "Dirty Dozen."

5. *Employment Tax Evasion.* The IRS has seen a number of illegal schemes that instruct employers not to withhold federal income tax or other employment taxes from wages paid to their employees. These schemes are based on an incorrect interpretation of "Section 861" and other parts of the tax law and have been refuted in court. Recent court cases have resulted in criminal convictions of promoters.

6. *Return Preparer Fraud.* Unscrupulous return preparers can cause a lot of problems for taxpayers who use their services. Abusive return preparers derive financial gain by diverting a portion of the taxpayer's refund for their own benefit, charging inflated fees for the return preparation services, and increasing their clientele by advertising guaranteed larger refunds.

7. *Americans with Disabilities Act.* Another scheme seen for several years involves the purchase of equipment and services that the promoter alleges meets the strict criteria of the Disabled Access Credit, which was created with the passage of the "Americans with Disabilities Act". A minimal payment is made and a non-recourse note signed. The investor then provides insignificant services to complete the purchase agreement.

8. *African-Americans Get a Special Tax Refund.* Thousands of African-Americans have been misled by people offering to file for tax credits or refunds related to reparations for slavery. There is no such provision in the tax law. Some unscrupulous promoters have encouraged clients to pay them to prepare a claim for this refund. But the claims are a waste of money. Promoters of reparations tax schemes have been convicted and imprisoned. And taxpayers could face a \$500 penalty for filing such claims if they do not withdraw the claim.

9. *Improper Home-Based Business.* This scheme purports to offer tax "relief" but in reality is illegal tax

avoidance. The promoters of this scheme claim that individual taxpayers can deduct most, or all, of their personal expenses as business expenses by setting up a bogus home-based business. But the tax code firmly establishes that a clear business purpose and profit motive must exist in order to generate and claim allowable business expenses.

10. *Frivolous Arguments.* Frivolous arguments are false arguments that are unsupported by law. When a scheme promoter says "I don't pay taxes — why should you" or urges you to "untax yourself for \$49.95," beware. The ads may claim that the promoter knows the "secret" for never paying taxes again, but that's just plain wrong. The U.S. courts have continuously rejected this and other frivolous arguments. Unfortunately, people across the country have paid for the "secret" of not paying taxes or have bought "untax packages." Then they find out that following the advice contained in them can result in civil and/or criminal penalties.

11. *Identity Theft.* Identity thieves use someone's personal data to steal

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his or her financial accounts, run up charges on the victim's existing credit cards, apply for new loans, credit cards, services or benefits in the victim's name and even file fraudulent tax returns. The IRS is aware of several identity theft scams involving taxes or the IRS. In one example, fraudsters sent bank customers fictitious bank correspondence and IRS forms in an attempt to trick them into disclosing their personal and banking data. In another, abusive tax preparers have used clients' Social Security numbers and other information to file false tax returns without the clients' knowledge.

12. *Share/Borrow EITC Dependents.* Unscrupulous tax preparers "share" one client's qualifying children with another client in order to allow both clients to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit. For example, one client may have four children but only needs to list two to get the maximum EITC. The preparer will list two children on the first client's return and the other two on another client's tax return. The preparer and the client "selling" the dependents split a fee.

Some of the Various Tricks and Traps of Debt Consolidation

by Liz Pulliam Weston
MSN Money Columnist

Here are some facts about debt consolidation consumers may want to lend an ear to. First, it's important to understand that a debt consolidation loan is no easy fix. It can actually multiply your debts. Watch out for sky-high rates, hidden fees, costly add-ons and damage to your credit rating.

The trouble with debt consolidation loans is twofold:

"The kind of borrowing typically does nothing to solve the problem that got the consumer into trouble in the first place: overspending.

"The loans can be far more expensive than the debt they're designed to pay off, full of hidden fees, expensive insurance and other profit-boosters for lenders.

There are actually two types of

loans that are typically used to consolidate debt: home-equity lending, which allows the consumers to borrow against the value of their houses, and personal lending, which is usually not backed by a home or other collateral but essentially relies on the borrower's promise to repay.

Personal loans offer interest rates of 14 percent to 15 percent for people with good credit. Those with heavy debts or troubled credit, however, usually pay more: 18 to 21 percent and up. These borrowers may also face upfront fees of as much as 10 percent of the loan amount.

As with any loan, the devil is in the details. If borrowers can secure a low rate, low-cost loan and pay their debt off faster than they might otherwise, then debt consolidation makes sense.

Too often, consumers look for

lower payments, rather than lower costs. Lower payments usually mean it will take you longer to pay off your debt and they inflate the total amount you ultimately pay.

Many people compound the problem by continuing to run up credit-card balances after they've consolidated their old debt. By adding more to their debt loads, they're bringing themselves closer to the financial brink.

You may be able to lower your interest rate without a debt consolidation loan. If you have good credit, your credit card companies may be willing to lower your rate if you simply ask. You may also be able to transfer balances to a lower rate card, but use this tactic with moderation: applying for too many cards can hurt your credit.

Liz Pulliam writes for MSN Money. NAPS



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N S J K L U Y T R E W S H J H J K R B W
B C U G F E R E W J H T E E W Y E W E Q
E F C E P O L L U X E R T R R T Y U I T S
T C E R O T Y U I U U I N E R T Y U A E
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L W F H J K A L P H A C R U C I S W E E
G D G D F R L C E D S U W E R T U J N M
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U Q F G E Y E U I T Y T R R T R U T A Y
S D G F R R P R N E R T R T R E T R U T
E F F E A G A E Y R T I U B T H C K R R
N R X T W F C E T R P I E Y J H C T I E
M I N R R A L D E B A R A N T Y A H J T
G A S T H G H G H J H O B E V D J J H E
F T D P V B R T Y U I C E D G H H H J T
H L L G H J K Q W C X Y N M E R T W H N
T A F G H J K H F G H O E W R T Y U L M
U Y S D F G T R T Y R N E R T Y R T K H

Achernar	Antares	Capella
Aldebaran	Arcturus	Deneb
Alpha Centauri	Beta Centauri	Fomalhaut
Alpha Crucis	Betelgeuse	Pollux
Altair	Canopus	Procyon

Historic Proportions

Match clues to answers.

- 1918
1. Signing of armistice on Nov. 11 put an end to this.
 2. World Series winners on Sept. 11.
 3. He became commander of joint British and French forces on Western Front on Mar. 26.
 4. Portuguese president assassinated on Dec. 15.
 5. Region declared independence from Turkey on Dec. 2.
 6. He received the Nobel Prize on Dec. 10 for his discovery of the nature of energy.
 7. He became president of Czechoslovakia on Nov. 14.
 8. American air ace downed more than two dozen of the enemy.
 9. Huge earthquake hit here on Oct. 25.
 10. A grain famine hit here during the fall.
 11. He was appointed chancellor of Germany on Oct. 3.
 12. He became president of Poland on Nov. 14.
 13. Former Russian czar and family executed by Bolsheviks in July.
 14. He was star of *A Dog's Life* on Apr. 14.
 15. Automatic rifle first tested on Mar. 25.
 16. He abdicated the throne in Bulgaria on Nov. 2.
 17. Rose Bowl winners on Jan. 1.
 18. He becomes president of China on Sept. 6.
- A. Armenia
B. Joseph Pilsudski
C. General Ferdinand Foch
D. Puerto Rico
E. Russia
F. Max Planck
G. Nicholas II
H. World War I
I. Captain Eddie Rickenbacker
J. Charlie Chaplin
K. Sidoni Paes
L. Mare Island Marines
M. Browning

Five Years Ago In the Grapevine

APRIL 1999

*Ruth Arvanites, an active member of St. James Presbyterian Church, was awarded a four-star pin by the Blood Center of the Pacific for 4,000 hours of volunteer work at the blood bank.

The Brightest Stars

H S D T Y W E Q W Y T U A H L A M O F H
H G F D S W E R R T J H C H K L Y I Y T
N S J K L U Y T R E W S H J H J K R B W
B C U G F E R E W J H T E E W Y E W E Q
E F C E P O L L U X E R T R R T Y U I T S
T C E R O T Y U I U U I N E R T Y U A E
E S T Y R N W U Y T T E A I Q Y E W C R
L W F H J K A L P H A C R U C I S W E E
G D G D F R L C E D S U W E R T U J N M
E W D B E R L S T Y A E R U T R R H T H
U Q F G E Y E U I T Y T R R T R U T A Y
S D G F R R P R N E R T R T R E T R U T
E F F E A G A E Y R T I U B T H C K R R
N R X T W F C E T R P I E Y J H C T I E
M I N R R A L D E B A R A N T Y A H J T
G A S T H G H G H J H O B E V D J J H E
F T D P V B R T Y U I C E D G H H H J T
H L L G H J K Q W C X Y N M E R T W H N
T A F G H J K H F G H O E W R T Y U L M
U Y S D F G T R T Y R N E R T Y R T K H

Achernar	Antares	Capella
Aldebaran	Arcturus	Deneb
Alpha Centauri	Beta Centauri	Fomalhaut
Alpha Crucis	Betelgeuse	Pollux
Altair	Canopus	Procyon

N. Hsu Shih Chang
O. Boston Red Sox
P. Prince Max von Bado
Q. Tomas Masaryk
R. King Boris

Answers: 1-C; 2-H; 3-B; 4-A; 5-B; 6-D; 7-I; 8-G; 9-F; 10-C; 11-D; 12-B; 13-G; 14-J; 15-M; 16-R; 17-L; 18-N

Sez Who?

Match quotes to speakers.

1. "No one keeps a secret so well as a child."
 2. "Great hopes make great men."
 3. "Well done is better than well said."
 4. "It is a luxury to be understood."
 5. "Not all who wander are lost."
 6. "To hold a pen is to be at war."
 7. "When in doubt, wear red."
 8. "The best proof of love is trust."
 9. "Wisdom begins in wonder."
- A. Ralph Waldo Emerson
B. J.R. Tolkien
C. Victor Hugo
D. Voltaire
E. Benjamin Franklin
F. Socrates
G. Dr. Joyce Brothers
H. Thomas Fuller
I. Bill Blass

New African Savanna Habitat at S.F. Zoo

On Memorial Day weekend, May 29, 30 and 31, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., the San Francisco Zoo will celebrate the opening of its new multi-species habitat, the African Savanna. The three-acre environment for mammals, such as giraffe and zebra, and African bird species, comprise a new home for up to 80 individual animals. The Savanna will offer unique viewing opportunities from various observation decks and pathways, special visitor areas and even from the middle of the habitat itself, accessed via a covered passageway.

This celebratory grand opening weekend will feature live music and entertainment, interactive activities, and a first time chance to experience the Savanna, participate in special programming, meet keepers and see animals in their spacious new habitat.

The San Francisco Zoo is located on Sloat Boulevard at 47th Avenue. The opening celebration is free with paid Zoo admission.

Did You Know?

*When choosing an automotive repair facility, the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence recommends you look for evidence of qualified technicians: trade school diplomas, certificates of advanced course work and certification by ASE indicate the presence of professional, trained technicians. Visit www.ase.com for more information about ASE-certified professionals.

*When deciding whether to refinance your home, ask yourself the following questions: Do I plan to stay in my home for a while? Will my expenses be covered in the mortgage payment? Should I buy title insurance? Some mortgages are set up to include costs for private mortgage insurance, property taxes and homeowner's insurance. For more information on the closing process, refinancing and title insurance, visit www.alta.org and look for Consumer Information.

*According to a recent survey by the Independent Sector, the percentage of high school students participating in volunteer activities has increased significantly over the past two decades, to 67 percent. Evidence of a trend can also be seen in the dramatic growth of The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program that honors middle and high school students for their volunteer work. Last year, the program had more than 24,000 applicants. To help ensure that this trend continues among young people, The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program will once again recognize students who have undertaken noteworthy volunteer projects over the past year. Information is available at www.prudential.com/spirit or by calling 1-888-450-9961.

*For kids to be successful in school and in life, good family communication is key, say organization experts at Office Depot. Whether a child is going to school for the first time or moving up a grade it's important for parents to review that child's school and extracurricular commitments early for the upcoming year. Get organized early. Many retailers including Office Depot let you buy in bulk and save on the basics such as pens, notebooks and construction paper.

*Waxing a car at least twice a year is recommended for maximum protection. A clean, well-maintained car can be worth up to 50 percent more at trade-in time, than one in fair condition, say experts at the Car Care Council. The council's "Be Car Care Aware" campaign educates customers about the benefits of regular car maintenance and repair. For more information, visit www.carcare.org.

*According to experts at HotJobs.com, any job search comes with some degree of anxiety, but it's important to set up some boundaries. By establishing a regular time to focus on your job search, you can transform it from a free-floating enterprise into a goal-oriented endeavor. Use salary calculators and industry reports from online recruitment sites such as HotJobs.com to develop an idea of your worth in today's market.

*The Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 includes several provisions that affect individual investors, say experts at Eaton Vance Mutual Funds. The most important are a lowering of tax rates for ordinary income and long-term capital gains and a change in the tax treatment of qualifying dividend income. For ordinary income, the former 38.6 percent peak tax rate is reduced to 35 percent, and the former 35 percent, 30 percent and 27 percent tax rates are reduced by 2 percent each. For information on Eaton Vance Mutual Funds, contact a financial advisor for a prospectus. Read the prospectus carefully

before investing or sending money.

*A growing number of people are finding there can be big benefits to starting their own small business. Many of them turn to the Small Business Administration (SBA) for help. In the 50 years since its founding, SBA has helped more than 20 million Americans start, grow and expand their businesses. It has also placed more than \$170 billion in direct or guaranteed loans in the hands of entrepreneurs. People can register for this year's SBA's National Entrepreneurial Conference and Expo (NECE) at SBA's Web site. For more information or to register for the conference, visit www.sba.gov, or call the toll-free number 1-800-U-ASK-SBA.

*There are ways you can survive a credit crunch. According to experts at MSN Money, you should build and maintain good credit. People with good credit histories and high credit scores will generally get the best deals regardless of the overall credit environment. Don't overextend. Maxing out your credit cards and borrowing every nickel a mortgage lender will give you are rarely good strategies. Pay down your debt. Start with nondeductible consumer debt, such as your credit cards, then move on to auto and personal loans. For more tips on credit and debt management, visit <http://money.msn.com> or use the planning tools offered in Microsoft Money software.

The Cat Goes to Heaven

A cat died and went to Heaven. He met his maker at the gate who said, "You've been a good cat all of these years. Anything you desire is yours. All you have to do is ask."

The cats said, "Well, I lived all my life with a poor family on a farm and had to sleep on hardwood floors."

"Say no more," the cat was told, and instantly, a fluffy pillow appeared.

A few days later, six mice were killed in a tragic accident and they went to Heaven. They also were met at the gate with the same offer made to the cat. The mice said, "All our lives we've had to run. We've been chased by cats, dogs and even women with brooms. If we could only have a pair of roller skates, we wouldn't have to run anymore."

"Say no more," was the reply, and instantly, each mouse was fitted with a beautiful pair of tiny roller skates.

About a week later, the cat was found asleep on his new pillow when he was gently awakened and asked, "Well, how are you doing? Are you happy here?"

The cat yawned and stretched and said, "Oh, I've never been happier in all my life. And those meals on wheels you've been sending over are the best."

As a Matter of Fact

*New York was the first state to require the licensing of motor vehicles. The law was adopted in 1901.

*True heather is not common in the United States, but many plants belonging to the heather family, including the blueberry, cranberry, azalea and rhododendron.

*Spanish explorers named the state of California after a treasure island in a popular Spanish tale.

*The rounded shape of Sugar Loaf Mountain in Brazil is the result of hundreds of millions of years of erosion.

*Paul Miller of Alta Loma, California grew the largest mustache ever grown in the United States. It measured eight feet by March 1993.

*A halophyte is a plant that grows in salty soil where most plants would die. Asparagus is a halophyte.

*The hermit crab's home is an empty sea snail shell. When the crab grows too big for the shell, it hunts for a larger one.

*The largest pearl in the world, the 14 lb., 1 oz. Pearl of Lao-tze was found at Palawan, Philippines on May 7, 1934.

*Mystery writer John Creasey wrote under 27 different pen names.

*All bodies of water are subject to the tide-producing forces of the sun and moon, but only when oceans and continents meet are the tides great enough to be noticed.

*The only person to win three consecutive Tony Awards in the same category is composer/lyricist Stephen Sondheim, who picked up awards for *Best Musical Score* for *Company* (1971), *Follies* (1972) and *A Little Light Music* (1973).

*The custom of decorating engagement and wedding rings with gems began around the year 1200.

*The oldest earth rocks ever discovered are more than 4.1 billion years old.

*Tequila, indigenous to Mexico, is obtained from the heart-sap of the mescal cactus.

*Paprika comes from the capsicum pepper plant.

*The word *companion* comes from the Latin words for *together* and *bread*. So a companion is literally someone with whom you share bread.

*The first known machine for making paper bags was built in the 1860s.

*The Patagonia region of South America is so called from the Spanish word for *big feet*. The Indians the Spanish found there were tall and wore large boots stuffed with grass.

Crossword Puzzle

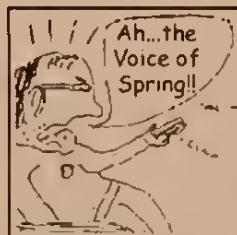
ACROSS

1. Cocoon insect
5. Former Korean president
9. Genetic letters
12. Dunlin bird
13. Male noble
14. Edible root
15. Sayings (Isrl.)
16. Vex
18. Having (Isrl.)
20. Shout
21. Formula
23. Fish with ball on the surface
24. Buddhist monk in nirvana
25. Held a session
26. Offense
29. Trouble
30. Mortar mixer
31. Shoshonean
32. River into the North Sea
33. Cistern
34. Oriental
36. Month abbr.
37. Jot
38. Felish
40. Fundamental
41. Incelise
42. Ingredient
43. Rubbish (Brit)
46. Anecdotes
47. Work (Sp.)
48. United States Dept. of
49. Ten decibels

DOWN

1. Greek letter
2. Caribbean lizard
3. Card game
4. Abbey (Sp.)
5. Queen (Fr.)
6. Slag
7. Slip
8. Educ
9. Old Eng. gold piece
11. National abbr.
11. Soul or spirit (Fr.)
17. Flap
19. Choose
21. Electric catfish
22. Great Lake
23. Flat fish
25. Pouch
26. Bag
27. Italic (abbr.)
28. Haw goose
30. Mortar heater
33. Seamark
34. S.A. sloths
35. Hile (2 words)
36. Coniferous tree
37. Muslim divorce
38. Without (Ger.)
39. Semitic deity
40. Pressure (pret.)
41. Public vehicle
42. Or best offer (abbr.)
44. Food and Drug Admin. (abbr.)
45. Cigarette (Brit. slang)

Sump, the Grump



What Everyone Should Know About Digital Television and HDTV

Walk into any consumer electronics retail location today and ask about a new television for your living room, and nine times out of 10 you'll be directed to the digital television (DTV) section of the showroom floor. Why? Because DTV is TV today. DTV is here, it is now and it is the must-have technology for the U.S. home.

What does DTV, and HDTV in particular, mean for the average U.S. consumer? It means crystal clear picture quality more than years times the clarity of your old analog set and digital sound quality similar to that of a compact disc. Because television sets have a lifespan of approximately eight years, consumers want to purchase a set that will provide the maximum benefit for the maximum number of years to come. For consumers today, that means the purchase of an HDTV product.

While existing analog TVs will continue to display programming for many years to come, consumers interested in purchasing a TV set or

set-top box that will satisfy demand should opt for the DTV product and, specifically, the HDTV product. Why? Because the nation's TV transmission system is going digital and that means that consumers' demand is moving digital with it.

Oftentimes, consumers with digital cable service or digital satellite service confuse their system with DTV or even HDTV. These are two distinct systems, however. Digital satellite and digital cable simply refer to a bitstream delivering the TV signal to the home. DTV, which comes in varying degrees of quality-standard definition (SDTV), which is the good; enhanced definition (EDTV), the better; and high-definition (HDTV), the best-refers to the quality of the programming, signal and equipment bringing the consumer the entertainment. DTV is a new standard that will ultimately replace today's analog TV system.

As one might guess, a system overhaul of this magnitude comes with its hurdles, and the DTV transition

is no exception. Until recently, HDTV sets were available on the market only for over-the-air (antenna) consumers and for a few DSB households. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently approved an inter-industry agreement, however, that will allow the nation's digital cable subscribers to purchase integrated HDTV sets (digital cable ready or DCRs) for a seamless "plug-and-play" transition from analog to HDTV service and enjoyment.

Hopefully, consumers won't think twice about this or even ponder how the set came to be for sale at retail; this is the point and intention of the "plug-and-play" agreement. Consumers in the digital world should purchase and install DTV and HDTV equipment as simply as they did analog TV. The difference with HDTV is the enjoyment. Never before has the American TV viewer known such high-quality audio and video entertainment. Now is the time for consumers to sit back and enjoy.

NAPS

Drivers Travel Worry-Free With Remote

Every day, millions of Americans hit the road, commuting, running errands, vacationing with their families, sometimes traveling hundreds of miles without thinking about the potential vehicle problems that could occur.

Fortunately, motorists whose vehicles are equipped with an in-vehicle communications system have access to a feature that can detect certain problems in a vehicle while traveling.

For example, Laura Tieman of Branson, Mo., realized the unique benefits of this capability while driving to New Orleans on a business trip. Tieman was about 300 miles from home when the "service engine soon" light appeared on her dashboard. Concerned about her vehicle's drivability and her own welfare if the car broke down, Tieman pushed the blue OnStar button in her vehicle and explained the situation to an advisor.

The advisor performed a GM Goodwrench Remote Diagnostics probe, which found that her ve-

hicle needed servicing immediately. The advisor scheduled her an appointment with a GM Goodwrench dealership in nearby Memphis. Tieman also worked with the dealer to arrange an alternate vehicle so she could continue her trip while her car was being serviced.

"Without OnStar, I don't know where I would have been stuck on the road I guess," said Tieman, who picked up the repaired vehicle on the return trip home a week later.

GM Goodwrench Remote Diagnostics is currently available on some 1997 model year and newer GM vehicles equipped with OnStar. Here's how it works:

When the subscriber presses the blue button and informs the advisor of the vehicle's performance, the advisor sends a diagnostic systems request signal to the vehicle's computer system via an imbedded wireless connection. The probe accesses the vehicle's trouble codes, which allow the advisor to explain to the subscriber the nature and severity of a possible problem and what action is needed.

Advisor recommendations can range from advising the customer to take the vehicle to the nearest dealer for service, to suggesting the customer pull over to wait for roadside assistance, to scheduling a service appointment.

"Remote diagnostics is very straightforward as far as how it can benefit the customer," said Phil Magney, principal analyst with the Telematics Research Group. "With telematics you can contact your service provider and they can help you diagnose what's wrong with the car by analyzing

Diagnostics Service

those fault codes wirelessly." Industry analysts say remote diagnostics will eventually lead to cost declines in warranty and recall costs and gather performance data that will assist the overall vehicle development process.

NAPS

Saturdays are Special At Randall Museum

The Randall Museum offers drop-in, hands-on art and science workshops every Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. at 199 Museum Way (off Roosevelt, above the Castro). All ages are welcome; under 8 must be accompanied by an adult. Museum admission is free with \$3 per person workshop fee. Call 554-9600 for further information.

*Apr. 3: *Spring Still Life*: Celebrate the Season's beauty and paint a *Spring Still Life*.

*Apr 10: *Egg Rattle*: Make your own egg rattle to shake up the spring.

Apr. 17: *Clay Tiles*: Decorate a soft clay tile with drawings and textures.

Other regular Saturday activities include:

*Morning Family Ceramics from 10 to 11:30 a.m. (\$5 per person workshop fee)

*Meet the Animals from 11:15 a.m. to 12 noon.

*Animal Feeding at 12 noon.

*Golden Gate Model Railroad Club Exhibit from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Beyond Bug Day
Explore the world of pollinators through fun hands-on art and science activities during *Beyond Bug Day* at the Randall Museum on Saturday, Apr. 24 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Avoiding Those Work-at-Home Scams

by Christopher Jones

When it comes to work-at-home jobs, let the job seeker beware. Work-at-home scams target the unskilled, homebound or financially needy with promises of easy money. A desire to "get rich quick" can make you especially vulnerable. But, a little common sense and the help of two powerful consumer watchdogs can help you steer clear of work-at-home scams. And when looking for jobs, make sure the job site is on your side and has a

Cooking Ideas

*A gift from the heart can be good for the heart as well. When choosing recipes, add a healthy twist by selecting items with a low sodium content. Web sites such as www.mrsdash.com offer several low-sodium gift ideas that taste so great, your friends and family may not think they're healthy. The American Heart Association recommends limiting sodium intake to 2,400 mg daily, but on average, many Americans consume nearly twice that amount. A snack mix made with Mrs. Dash seasoning makes a great gift for just about anyone. For "giftable" recipes, such as Spiced Pecans or Cheddar Shortbread, log on to www.mrsdash.com.

*Crisp green beans, firm summer squash and crunchy cucumbers traditionally have been summer vegetables, but thanks to high-quality imports from Mexico, they're now widely available throughout fall and winter. Mexico exported 55 million pounds of fresh green beans in 2002. These bright favorites are low in calories, fat and sodium and high in fiber, vitamins A and C and potassium. So, try them in Huevos con Ejotes y Chorizo, a one-dish meal with scrambled eggs and spicy Mexican or Spanish sausage called chorizo. Why not serve the huevos dish with a side of summer squash. Slice it into coins, sauté it in a touch of olive oil and sprinkle it with fresh cilantro. To cap off the brunch, try a plate of tropical fruit such as melon or papaya.

NAPS

policy against listing these types of scams, like Yahoo! HotJobs.

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission and the Better Business Bureau have identified the most common work-at-home scams as assembly, envelope stuffing, medical billing, online businesses that promise to turn your computer "into a cash machine" and pyramid schemes.

To help spot a scam before it spots you, be suspicious of companies that do the following:

*Make you pay upfront for materials you'll need to work.

*Run ads which say "no experience necessary" or "easy money."

*Make exaggerated claims of potential earnings.

*Use testimonials that cannot be confirmed.

*Avoid putting details about the program in writing.

One option for those who want to work at home is starting a home-based business. It is not, however, an easy solution. It requires time, money and persistence. An excellent compromise for those who do not want to work full-time or accept the risk and extra costs of a home business is to work part-time in an office outside the home. These include:

**Compressed work week*: An employee puts in a full work week in less than five days.

**Flexible Work Schedule*: An employee may vary arrival/departure times.

**Job Sharing*: Two or more employees share the duties of one full-time job.

**Telecommuting*: An employee works at home during a portion of the week.

For more information about part-time and full-time career opportunities, and job seeking advice, you may visit www.hotjobs.com. NAPS

Grapevine Want Ads

VOLUNTEERS WANTED for WVCC After School Program to tutor children ages 5-14 at one of our 11 sites in the Visitation Valley area. Interested persons contact Dee Smith, WVCC After School coordinator. (415) 585-2059.
A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY. The John McLaren Child Development Center seeks in-kind donations for our newly-created lending library: children's books and magazines; small children's furniture; writing and/or art supplies; educational/cultural games or posters. Thank you in advance for your kindness and generosity! Please send all donations to: John McLaren Child Development Center, 2055 Sunnydale Ave., San Francisco, CA 94134. Call 469-4519 if you would like for us to pick-up any materials.
GRAPEVINE DISPLAY ADVERTISING new limited-time rates: Full Page: \$60, 1/2 Page: \$33.75, 1/4 Page: \$18.75, 1/8 Page: \$10, 1/12 Page: \$8; 1/16 Page: \$6. Generous discount for three or more insertions. Call (415) 467-9300 for more details.
Want Ads: 20 words for \$1. Extra line 50 cents. Ad and payment should be received by 15th of prior month at Visitation Valley Grapevine, 50 Raymond Ave., San Francisco, CA 94134.

AUTOMOTIVE
BAYSHORE AUTO, 2260 Bayshore Blvd., 467-6130
BAYSHORE SERVICE, 2596 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5239
CHARLIE'S GARAGE, 2550 Bayshore Blvd., 239-7450
T.W. AUTOMOTIVE (mechanic), 2500 Bayshore Blvd., 585-8281
VALLEY AUTO & TRUCK SUPPLY (Bill Conte), 2520 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5880
BANK
BANK OF AMERICA, 6 Leland Ave., 622-4501
BAKERS
CUNEO BAKERY, 96 Leland Ave., 239-6090
LITTLE QUIAPO BAKE SHOP, 169 Leland Ave., 239-2253
BARBERS
DeMASI'S BARBER SHOP, 35 Leland Ave.
THE SHOP (JB), 178 Leland Ave., 239-6709
BEAUTICIANS
BOOY, SOUL & SPIRIT, 222 Leland Ave., 333-7261
MAY MAY BEAUTY SALON, 60 Leland Ave., 337-9381
MIZRENA'S SALON, 19 Blanken Ave., 467-3399
NAILS BY JENNY, 50 Leland Ave., 333-6800 WHO'S BAD?, 224 Leland Ave., 657-3156
BUNDO CLEANING
SPEEQU ULTRASONIC BUNDO CLEANING (commercial and residential), 1116 Girard St., 467-7506
BOARDING HOUSE
ABLE'S CASA, 850 Rutland St., 333-4664, fax 333-4693
BOOKKEEPERS
AMY ARAGON, PROFESSIONAL BOOKKEEPER, 467-8927
VERNA WALLACE E.A., 2320 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5333
CARPETS
HANSAN INTERIORS, 41 Leland Ave., 333-6382
CASKETS
CASKETORIUM, INC., 90 Leland Ave., 585-3451
CHURCHES
CHURCH OF THE VISITACION, 655 Sunnydale Ave., 239-5950
IGLESIA EL ESPIRITU SANTO, 38 Leland Ave.

KOREAN FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 333 Tunnel Ave., 468-1213
RIDGE VIEW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 590 Leland Ave., 239-5457
ST. JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 240 Leland Ave., 586-6381
VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH, 305 Raymond Ave., 467-6055
VISITACION CHINESE BAPTIST CHURCH, 8 Desmond St., 333-4503
COFFEE
HAPPY DONUT, 2600 Bayshore Blvd., 469-5309
PICCOLO PETE'S EUROPEAN COFFEE, 2155 Bayshore Blvd., 467-2442
OAY CARE
CARQUEL DAY CARE, 261 Hahn St., 469-5353
DENTIST
VISITACION VALLEY DENTAL OFFICE (Albert Kuan, DDS), 37 Leland Ave., 239-5500
DEVELOPERS
VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, 333 Schwern St., 587-7895
ELECTRICAL
TATE ELECTRIC (Joel Tate), 467-4657
FLORISTS
IL FIORE FLOWERS, 2466 San Bruno Ave., 468-0145
GARDEN ORNAMENTS
SILVESTRI GAROEN ORNAMENTS, 2635 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5990
GROCERS
E-Z STOP MARKET, 2203 Geneva Ave., 585-9240
FIVE MILE MARKET, 3574 San Bruno Ave., 467-7300
K.C. MARKET, 400 Wide St., 467-3024
LITTLE VILLAGE MARKET, 1450 Sunnydale Ave., 586-1815
M & M SHORTSTOP, 2145 Geneva Ave., 585-0878
PICCOLO PETE, 2155 Bayshore Blvd., 468-6800
SARI-SARI FOOD STORE, 58 Leland Ave., 239-0580

7-11, 2200 Bayshore Blvd., 468-8646
SHUN LEE MARKET, 2400 Bayshore Blvd., 586-4851
SMITTY'S MARKET, 2610 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5506
SUPER FAIR MARKET, 201 Leland Ave., 239-6856
TEDDY'S MARKET, 298 Teddy Ave.
VALLEY SUPER MARKET, 65 Leland Ave., 239-7520
HERBS
SAN ON HERBS, 33-A Leland Ave. 333-7469
HYPNOTHERAPY
VALERIE HABEGGER-HYPNOTHERAPY, 371 Teddy Ave., 468-5531
INSURANCE
EDIE FEPPS (A.H.E. INSURANCE), 467-0236, Fax 467-0276
ROBERT LEHMAN, CLTC, CMFC, 333-0850
ALICE L. WONG, 160A Leland Ave., 337-8811
KITCHEN CABINETS
LEE CHANG INTERNATIONAL, INC., 25 Leland Ave., 333-2730, fax 333-1706
LAUNDRY/CLEANERS
BAY WASH, 44 Leland Ave.
CITY WASH INTERNATIONAL, 83 Leland Ave., 333-9467
COIN WASH & DRY LAUNDRY, 186 Leland Ave.
FORTY-NINER CLEANERS, 51 Leland Ave., 239-6418
LELANO AVENUE CLEANERS, 151 Leland Ave., 586-1412
VALLEY LAUNDRY, 90 Leland Ave.
VISITACION VALLEY LAUNDRY, 108 Leland Ave., 239-9030
LEARNING
3-N-1 LEARNING ACADEMY, 240 Leland Ave., 584-8555
VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY BEACON CENTER, 450 Raymond Ave., 452-4907
VISITACION VALLEY FAMILY SCHOOL, 325 Leland Ave., 586-9320
LIBRARY
VISITACION VALLEY BRANCH, 45 Leland Ave., 239-5270
LOGGING
THRIFT LOGG, 2011 Bayshore Blvd., 467-8811

MANUFACTURER
NATIONWIDE PAPER, 345 Schwern St., 586-9160
MEDICAL
AMERICAN RED CROSS, BAY AREA CHAPTER, 1704 Sunnydale Ave., 584-3620
HAWKINS VILLAGE MEDICAL CLINIC (Dept. of Public Health), 333 Schwern St., Appointments: 715-0310
OR SAM HO, M.D., 9 Sillman St. No. 4, 337-6135
NORTH EAST MEDICAL SERVICES, LELANO AVENUE, 82 Leland Ave., 391-9686 (ask for Leland Avenue clinic)
PORTOLA FOOT & ANKLE CLINIC (Dr. Divyang Patel) 2858 San Bruno Ave., 467-7500
NOTARY
ROYAL PACIFIC MORTGAGE & REALTY 46 Leland Ave., 333-4900
ORGANIZATIONS
ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER, 2442 Bayshore Blvd., 587-2689
GENEVA TERRACE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION, 60 Burr Ave., 584-2700
GIRLS AFTER SCHOOL ACADEMY, 2050 Sunnydale Ave., 333 Schwern St., 584-4044
JOHN KING SENIOR COMMUNITY, 500 Raymond Ave., 239-6233
LELAND HOUSE, 141 Leland Ave., 405-2000
ROCK (Real Options for City Kids), 590 Leland Ave., 333-4001
VISITACION VALLEY SENIOR CENTER, 66 Raymond Ave., 467-4499
PHARMACY
VISITACION VALLEY PHARMACY, 100 Leland Ave., 239-5811
PHOTOGRAPHER
WALTER CORBIN PHOTOGRAPHY (freelance), 435 Sawyer St., 587-9471, fax 337-8620
PLUMBING
MARK VOELKER PLUMBING, 99 Arleta Ave., 467-7401
POST OFFICE
VISITACION USPO, 68 Leland Ave., (800) 275-8777

REAL ESTATE
Cathy Kline Saunders, (Zephyr Real Estate), 215 West Portal Ave 731-5011 ex 163
RESTAURANTS
CLIFF'S BAR-B-Q & SEAFOOD, 2177 Bayshore Blvd 330-0736, Fax 330-9813
4 EVERYDAY PEOPLE, 107 Leland Ave., 308-5673
G & L BAKERY & RESTAURANT, 198 Leland Ave., 239-6283
SUN FAT RESTAURANT, 30 Leland Ave., 587-2763
LUAN FAT BAKERY, 110 Leland Ave., 585-1167
RUSSIA HOUSE, 2011 Bayshore Blvd., 467-0252
SHIREL'S SOUL FOOD, 107 Leland Ave., 239-5141
TWO JACK'S RESTAURANT, 167 Leland Ave., 337-0433
Y & G RESTAURANT, 73 Leland Ave., 469-5686
SCULPTOR
CARTORIGINALS (Mikal Cartor), 2 Hahn St., 239-4138
SELF-DEVELOPMENT
DYNAMIC DEVELOPMENTS (Marjorie Ann Williams, CEO, Career and Self-Enhancements Specialist) 467-7608
SERVICE PROVIDERS
THE VILLAGE, 333 Schwern St., 239-5045
VISITACION VALLEY BILINGUAL EDUCATION, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES & TRAINING (VIBESST), 120 Leland Ave., 586-7347
VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER (VWCC), 50 Raymond Ave., 467-6400
WVCC FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER, 161 Leland Ave., 586-6958, Fax 586-8027
VISITACION VALLEY JOBS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VJNET), 333 Schwern St., 239-2866
SIGNS
SMITH'S SIGNS, 153 Leland Ave., 333-2700
TAVERN
THE CLUB HOUSE, 25 Blanken Ave.
TELEPHONE
O & A WIRELESS, 78 Leland Ave. 452-4139
VARIETY
GOLDEN 99 CENTS ZONE, 5-7 Leland Ave., 333-3923
VIDEO
No. 1 VIDEO RENTAL, 144 Leland Ave., 586-1038

Visitation Valley Business Directory

Valley business and organization free listings in the 415 area code. Call the Grapevine at (415) 467-9300.

HUD Expanding Communities With Affordable Housing

From Page 1

"The goal of the brochure is to provide timely information to community leaders and create a national dialogue aimed at developing innovative strategies to overcome those regulatory barriers that can all too often price housing out of reach for families and individuals," explained A. Bryant Applegate, Senior Counsel and Director of HUD's Affordable Communities Initiative. "This Administration is deeply committed to making sure that affordable homeownership and rental opportunities are made available for hard working Americans serving our communities across the nation."

The brochure is the latest of HUD's efforts to educate communities on the potentially detrimental impact of regulatory barriers on affordable housing and encourage communities to hold public forums on the reduction of regulatory barriers.

HUD recently created an Affordable Initiatives Communities Initiative team that is carefully reviewing all HUD rules, policies and notices of funding availability, to ensure that no unnecessary regulatory barriers exist or are being proposed. The initiative team is also developing numerous other projects, including:

*A new, annual awards program designed to honor those communities that are expanding affordable housing opportunities by reducing regulatory barriers and creating an environment supportive of the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing;

*A potential restructuring of the NOFA process, aimed at reducing regulatory barriers at the local level by giving applicants the option of answering a series of

questions on what their jurisdictions are doing to address and/or remove some common regulatory barriers;

"The release of an update to the 1991 Kemp Commission report "Not in My Backyard - Removing Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing;" and

"The holding of a major affordable housing conference and a series of roundtable discussions.

HUD also launched the Regulatory Barriers Clearinghouse, a web-based forum that provides builders and developers from around the country the opportunity to share ideas and solutions for overcoming state and local regulatory barriers to affordable housing. The Clearinghouse supports state and local governments, builders, community planners, non-profits, and the American public seeking information about laws, regulations, and policies affecting the development, maintenance, improvement, availability, and cost of affordable housing. Services offered by the

Regulatory Barriers Clearinghouse include:

*A searchable database of publications, local laws, regulations, policies, and plans that identifies problem areas and offers possible solutions based on real-world experiences;

*A toll-free number (1-800-245-2691, option 4) staffed by housing professionals familiar with regulatory barrier issues and the clearinghouse collection; and

*An electronic newsletter that highlights successful barrier removal strategies and policies, including a brief list of sources for further information.

"I am confident that the steps we are taking to educate community leaders are making a tangible difference," said Applegate. "The ideas being generated and shared on our Web site, in forums and in our publications are making community leaders more aware of the affordability problem and eventually will produce more affordable housing for hard working families across America."

Searching for America's Oldest Worker

Seniors are the fastest growing population in the United States, and more businesses are relying on the experience and expertise of older workers to get the job done. Many employers feel that the positive work ethic, loyalty and dependability of older workers is necessary for the long-term vitality of this nation. Yet, there are still negative stereotypes and a lack of understanding about the positive contribution made by older workers to this country.

To break down barriers associated with hiring older workers, Experience Works launched the Prime Time Awards Program. In its seventh year, the program recognizes an outstanding older worker from each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, America's Oldest Worker, and top employers of older workers.

In past years, the outstanding older workers have ranged in age from 66

to 100. Last year, the average age was 78. All of the past America's Oldest Workers have been over 100 years old and working almost full time at their professions.

To be considered for a state's outstanding older worker or "America's Oldest Worker," applicants must be currently employed and work a minimum of 20 hours per week in paid employment, plus be over 65 years old. Outstanding older workers will be invited to Washington, D.C., in October 2004.

To access a nomination form, visit www.experienceworks.org. To receive a nomination form by mail, send a postcard or note to Prime Time Awards, Experience Works, 2200 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 1000, Arlington, VA 22201, or call, toll free, 1-866-EXP-WRKS (1-866-397-9757). Nominations must be submitted by April 30, 2004. NAPS

Park Planning Meeting Discusses City's Recreation and Park Budget



Robert Lehman

The Neighborhood Parks Council held a District 10 meeting on Feb. 24 at Louis Sutter Playground to discuss the Recreation and Park budget.

by Robert Lehman

Representatives from the Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC) held a Park Planning Meeting for District 10 on Feb. 24 at the clubhouse of the Louis Sutter Playground in the Portola District concerning the state of the current Recreation and Park Department (RPD) budget.

After NPC's Betty Traynor conducted introductions, Isabel Wade discussed the current RPD budget along with potential ways to inform the public, including: postcards to the mayor, letter writing, posted

signs in parks and a demonstration at City Hall.

Mark Hymel spoke of the ParkScan process where technology is used to monitor problems in parks, with computers sending this information to RPD maintenance personnel.

Bill Carlin, representative of the City's Park, Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee, spoke of the current and upcoming capital improvements in the San Francisco park system.

NPC meetings were held in all City districts through March gather input for future work.

Composting and Gardening Classes in April

*Spring Composting: Saturday, Apr. 3, 10 a.m.-12 noon. Come to the beautiful Garden for the Environment and learn the techniques of composting and how to use it for healthy plants and hardy vegetables and fruits. Garden for the Environment, 7th Ave. at Lawton St. Free!

*Container Gardening: Saturday, Apr. 17, 10 a.m.-12 noon. Ideal for the urban gardener, learn creative ways to make even the dreariest driveway into an explosion of food and flowers. You'll be amazed at the beauty and bounty you can get

from container gardening. Garden for the Environment, 7th Ave. at Lawton St. Please call (415) 731-5627 to pre-register. Free!

*Sustainable Landscape Installation Day: Saturday, Apr. 24, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Join our Resource Efficient Gardening and Landscaping Program for this final workday to install a sustainable landscape at the Garden for the Environment on 7th Ave. at Lawton St. Drop in or plan to stay all day and learn about native plants, irrigation and sheet mulching. Bring a potluck dish to share and your own plate and utensils.

Family/Community Services Center

Visitacion Valley Community Center, Inc.



**Classes at
Visitacion Valley Community Center,
50 Raymond (Ceramic Room)**

**Parenting Education Class
Every Monday, 5:30-7p.m.
Intake at 5 p.m., Counseling Room**

**Men's Support Group: (52 Weeks)
Every Tuesday & Thursday, 6-8p.m.**

**Women's Support Group: (52 Weeks)
Every Wednesday, 6-8 p.m.**

For more information,
please contact the following
staff members at (415) 586-6998:
Meriam T. Abalos, FCSC Coordinator
Marianna Y. Chan, Marichelle Pecson
Michelle Lau, MSW
Lateka Hampton, DeJuan Redwood

Open:

Monday and Friday: 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

161 Leland Avenue

**Financial Literacy Workshop by Jumpstart
Friday, April 9: 5:30-7p.m. at 325 Leland Ave.**

**Parent's Advisory Council/Community Meeting
Friday, April 2, 5:30-6:30 p.m. at 325 Leland Ave.**
Dinner and Childcare will be Provided!

**Father's Support Group, Friday, April 16
at 333 Schwerin St. #203.**

Refreshments and Childcare will be Provided!

**Cantonese Kinship Support Group, Every Friday
1:30-3:30 p.m. at 50 Raymond Ave. (VVCC Ballroom)**
Refreshments and Childcare will be Provided!

**Parent's Support Group, Saturday, April 24,
10:30-11:30a.m. at 161 Leland Ave.**

Lunch and Childcare will be Provided!

**Meet and Eat, Friday April 30: Parent/Child/Family
with Games and Activities for the Whole Family
5:30-7 p.m. at 50 Raymond Ave. Dinner Provided!**

**Free Grocery Pantry Distribution from 12:30 to 2:15 p.m.,
Saturdays, April 3, 10, 17 and 24 at 161 Leland Ave.**
Pre-registration required prior Monday through Thursday (9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)

(415) 586-6998 Fax 586-8027